The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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The Fourth of July

JULY FIFTH newspapers carried their usual accounts of the casualties produced by what, in this instance, was for many Americans a four-day holiday. The most ironical of all the sad fatalities was the death in an automobile accident in Michigan of the son of the secretary of the National Safety Council who was himself a student of safety engineering. As usual in recent years, the automobile accounted for the largest number of deaths. Drownings came second. All other types of accidental death put together did not equal the total arising from these two main causes. At present writing, no one had been killed by fireworks. For that at least we can be thankful. But it seems a distressing thing that a nation cannot take a holiday without losing nearly six hundred of its citizens. Still we are a nation of 130,000,000, and 600 is a small fraction of so large a population. Most of those 600 died in the pursuit of pleasure—driving or swimming—and innocent enough pleasure at that. Yet both sports have their dangers. We are perhaps impressed at the figure 600, which we can understand, largely because we cannot really grasp the figure 130,000,000.

Bloody . . . Glorious

Catholics and the American Way

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA'S thirteenth annual Institute of Public Affairs opened in a most happy way with a vesper service address by Bishop O'Hara of Savannah-Atlanta. The program proper contained many interesting features—perhaps the most piquant being the appearance on the same platform of the two military and militant Johnsons, whose feud continues as violently as ever. Bishop O'Hara chose the occasion strikingly to emphasize the tradition of the Church in America to welcome the freedom offered it by the American way and to emphasize the need for religion to preserve the American way. "In America we are indeed fortunate, for we have a democratic form of government that is as near to the ideal as one could expect. Our entire American philosophy of government is based on the grand religious truth of the dignity of the individual and on the sacredness of his rights. It follows that it is our common responsibility to exert every effort to maintain it and to resist every movement set on foot to limit or destroy it, and to stir up hatred, bitterness and strife among us. . . . No words are too strong to denounce the activity of any minister of religion who would stir up class hatred."

Bishop O'Hara

What is the Current Crisis?

NO ONE apparently knows just what is the most important international question the correct answer to which would tell us if a world war will break out this summer. Will the Germans try to seize Danzig? Will the Poles fight if they do try? Will England and France come right into the war if the Poles fight back? Will England and Russia finally conclude an alliance? These questions, impossible to answer with complete certainty, are still rather shallow questions, relating to possible incidents and not to deeper trends and causes. Historians of the future will not say that peace was preserved or shattered in August, 1939, because Danzig was or was not seized or because the Soviets and British did or did not sign a new treaty. The historians will perhaps muse—however futilely—over one more abstract consideration. The tempo of social and economic change still differs greatly from country to country. Right now, England and France and, even more so, the United States, are laggards. Our nations have a historical obliga-

Ominous August

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tion to move. We must radically change our institutions and our environment, so far as we control it, and the relations between them. Not, let us pray, according to the pattern of communism or fascism, but rather, let us hope, toward more genuine Chrisitan democracy. Intelligent social progressivism can reduce many sources of friction with neighbors, even when we consider their own social movement by no means progressive. The emotion and will with which we meet friction is a more spiritual and moral problem. Not many people in the world want war now: not Hitler, not Chamberlain, Mussolini or Stalin and not the masses of the people. With affairs tied up as they are now, that is the only near hope.

Japanese Incident

Answer to a Riddle

A RIDDLE which asked, "Why are a cherry tree, a battle cruiser and a barkless dog alike?" might not suggest an obvious answer. Yet these things are all associated with the same fact in the same way, as a recent news item may perhaps remind us. Two years ago Miss Helen Keller lectured in the Orient to combat the superstition that blindness is a curse of the gods. Appreciation of her valor and humanity was shown by many Nipponese, among them a policeman who made her a present of a barkless dog—a strong, intelligent animal fitted to companion and guard the famous blind woman. When it succumbed to distemper, her sense of loss was so real that her friends wrote back to Japan of the matter; where, through the successive offices of a newspaper correspondent, a secretary and the Foreign Minister, the original donor was at last reached. He has gladly responded with the gift of another dog. This reminds us of the same thing as cherry-blossom time in Washington does, or as the battle cruiser did which took home in honor the remains of a former Japanese ambassador, loved and esteemed in this country: that good-will and friendship can exist between very diverse nations, in spite of very real difficulties. Spontaneous fellow-feeling may not prevail over "incidents" of a more horrendous character; but let us remember that it is just as real, and that its possibility is just as permanent.

A Lesson for Us All

Cardinal Principle

THE NEWS that Cardinal Innitzer — and, through him, the Church — has suffered fresh indignities at the hands of Nazi crowds in Austria comes as a shock and a warning. Of all prelates who have been given a clear choice in the face of Nazism, he was given perhaps the most clean-cut. The record was available as it had not been available to the hierarchy of Germany. Either he could try to conciliate Hitler or he could oppose him. Cardinal Innitzer, acting undoubtedly in profound good faith and in the apostolic hope that a conciliatory attitude on his part would better the attitude of the German state toward the Church, chose the first alternative. Nor was this entirely in line with his previous policy. He had opposed at first the Austrian corporative state on the ground that it was not sufficiently a manifestation of popular will. It is true he had been Minister of Public Welfare in the cabinet of Chancellor Johann Schober in 1929, who favored a sort of *Anschluss,* and the fact of his Sudeten origin could also have justified the supposition that his attitude toward Hitler was based on pan-German sentiment as well as on a coldly objective decision. The irony of the situation is that almost as soon as his conciliatory attitude was made manifest, the German state began to permit and undoubtedly encouraged attacks upon the Church through attacks upon his own person. Totalitarianism and Christianity are shown again to be deeply antagonistic. It is historic tragedy that through attacks upon the person of the man who most sincerely tried to open the way for peace should be demonstrated the impossibility of anything but conflict. It is one of the few classic tragedies in our melodramatic age.

Congress Stays in Town

What Will Be Done?

THE SESSION of Congress preceding the national elections has the peculiar function of deliberately creating election issues and directly gratifying groups of voters. The purposes of the bills debated upon do not show up in their preambles. What further issues will Congress still wish to dramatize for the campaigns? Apparently not the straight labor issue, as could be done by bringing up the Wagner Act and the Wages and Hours law. Social Security will likely be made more generous, as atonement for the vote against Townsend. But already, without any further debates, the general point has been established. The opposition to the New Deal has been stated in general legislative terms and has developed momentum. The administration is in a position to play its political cards last no matter how long Congress stays in Washington. How precise and how fervent various candidates for election and reelection should be on specific points in order to get votes can be best determined at home. We are glad that the embargo was one issue on which the legislators were willing to be definite, and are also glad that early rumors of attacks on the labor laws had not, at this writing, been substantiated by congressional activity (although enough has been done locally). In any case, the electoral districts are more appropriate regions for the kind of electoral politics are inevitable now up to next fall than the halls of the capitol.

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The High Cost of Building

RUMORS from Washington are that the Department of Justice may prosecute some of the building trades unions under the anti-trust laws. The government wants to lower the cost of home building, and union activities cannot be overlooked in any such effort. The part that labor plays in housing costs can be too easily over-estimated. A lot of people simply know that building workers get a much higher hourly rate than they themselves do, and go on from there to draw extreme conclusions. The problem is not simple. In a pamphlet on "How to Economize in Buying Land for Your Home," the School of Living at Suffern lists the following most important costs in getting a home: "(a) purchase price of the land, (b) building materials and supplies, (c) building labor, (d) machinery and tools used in building, (e) overhead expenses of the builder, (f) speculative profits of the builder, and (g) the acquisition costs—the legal, financial . . . etc." The labor item in all that is small, it is evident, and even more evident after considering that experiments made by the School of Living indicate that "93 percent of the money ordinarily paid for land in a commercial sub-division can be saved." The unions should not be made the victim of an economy drive. In fact, the approach to the building labor problem should be positive and not punitive. How can the annual wage of building workers be increased? How can racketeering in the unions be rooted out? How can collusion between contractors and locals be prevented? How can the exasperating absurdities involved in the craft divisions be eliminated? How can men be encouraged to do the best job they can with reasonable speed? Breaking the unions will solve none of these troubles. But blindly opposing all investigation and opposing all revision of present (however seldom actually enjoyed) hourly wage-scales, would also do no good.

Unions Brought In

Youth Congress Meets

THE LAST FEW DAYS have seen a stormy session of the American Youth Congress. On the opening day a small group of delegates insisted that in condemning dictatorships, all sorts of dictatorship be specifically condemned—communism, fascism, nazism. At once the proponents of this amendment to the Congress's official "creed" were assailed with cries of "red-baiters," "Coughlinites," "anti-Semites." The amendment was almost unanimously voted down and the amending delegates—fifteen of them—marched out. Evidently consciences began to prick during the night that followed. In any case an elaborate resolution was drawn up for the next day, approved by the resolutions committee and almost unanimously passed by the Congress: "Be it resolved, that the Congress of Youth record its opposition to all forms of dictatorship, regardless of whether they be Communist, Fascist, Nazi or any other type, or bear any other name." First you are against it—and then you are for it. And is dictatorship, anyway, the root of the evils of Communism, Fascism and Nazism? Perhaps youth is fickle. If so, that is all the more reason, as Edward Kirchner, international president of Pax Romana, recently pointed out in *Action,* why with real charity it is possible in youth organizations to prevent right and left tendencies from leading to irreconcilable differences. Mankind has its common humanity; to this youth adds its common energy and enthusiasm, and should add a common generosity of heart.

Putting in Communism

Prize-Fighting

NOW that Joe Louis, the heavyweight champion, has knocked out the robustious and vocal challenger Tony Galento, the periodical crop of letters deploring prize-fighting once more begins to make its appearance in the papers. It is unlikely that these correspondents will prevail, of course. What they say of the uselessness of pugilism applies to all professional sports; and what they say of its brutality must be judged in the light of the constant modification and control of the blood-letting and bone-crushing aspects of the prize ring. The scientific training, the medical supervision, the establishment of a fifteen-round maximum are a far cry indeed from the days of bare knuckles and forty-five rounds (or was it sixty?). Yet it is true, by the inconsistency of that human race with which so many of us find ourselves associated, that what the crowd still loves is a "killer." The public which has steadily brought pressure to bear to qualify the brutality of fisticuffs is the same public which still cries to its be-trunked and be-gloved idols to "knock his ears off." It has yet to be proved that the satisfaction of this taste vicariously through the spectacle of prize fights is in itself a bad thing. The taste is certainly there, and pugilism is perhaps a better safety valve than bull-fighting or lynching.

Is It Wrong?

Our Error Department

AN UNFORTUNATE ERROR appeared in the sub-title of "Rudder or Rock," by Sister Miriam, R.S.M., in THE COMMONWEAL, July 7. The quotation given was attributed to Mr. Scott Buchanan, "President" of St. John's College. Mr. Buchanan is dean of that institution, and the words should have been attributed to Mr. Stringfellow Barr, who is St. John's president.

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Tale of Two Capitals

1939 sees no end to human misery in the United States. Here are reports from Washington and Harrisburg.

By **Dorothy Day**

Washington

IT IS a hot summer afternoon in Washington, but there is a good breeze coming in the windows as I write. The radio is going in the front room—soothing waltzes—and Mary is sitting in a flowered voile dress embroidering a doily. Mary is quite black and her dress is very fresh and white, and she is a picture, cool and calm. She has set the two big tables for supper, which is her share of the evening's work. She and her two sisters have also helped me to peel potatoes in the back yard. The beans have been strung and Miss Selew has seared the meat and it is now simmering away in a deep pan, covered with good brown gravy. Betty Walsh soon comes in from her classes at the Catholic University to finish up the job and serve. It is her turn, but she has been giving an examination, so everyone had jumped into the breach.

Dinner is served at Il Poverello House on Tenth Street in Washington every night at six-thirty, and swarms of the children of the neighborhood come in. There are three little girls living in the house and two big girls, both graduates of Francis Xavier University in New Orleans, now finishing up a year of graduate work at the Catholic University. These, with the two older women, who teach at the University, make up the family.

But everyone in the neighborhood considers the house a sort of headquarters and comes for aid of one kind or another. The doors are open when the women get home from school and the work of hospitality goes on. Bedtime is early, because everyone gets up at quarter past five to offer the Mass at the shrine at quarter of six, where they all make the responses together, and where Father Paul Hanley Furfey gives a short homily every day. It's a good way of starting the day, and the early morning is cool and fragrant as we drive over to the Shrine.

The life of the group at Il Poverello house is dedicated to voluntary poverty. The principle is, "If we have less, everyone will have more." So on this very immediate practical idea, many are helped.

They certainly need help, the Negroes in Washington. Down the alley in back of this house—it is a two-story, box-like structure for which the rent is $75 a month—the tiny little houses with no running water, rent for $16 a month. Quite literally they are hovels. Places that would rent for $8 a month in New York cost twice as much here. And places are hard to find.

Washington is a beautiful city; the streets are tree-shaded and on the streets the houses are mostly not bad. But down the alleys live the great mass of poor, crowded in dirty, evil-smelling, little holes. There the unemployed hang out, dull and lethargic, some vicious and dissipated, as well as the greater number who struggle against terrific odds to keep themselves human, to rise above their surroundings.

The Blessed Martin Home

Down at 1215 Seventh Street, Llewellyn Scott manages his House of Hospitality which he calls the Blessed Martin Home. The address is on Seventh Street but the entrance is down the alley. On the door hangs a crucifix. The stairs leading to the two floors above a barber shop are dark and rickety. On the walls are holy pictures and in the two sitting rooms upstairs are many more. There are beds everywhere, even in the front living room, which is filled with books and some easy chairs. In this room a very old man sleeps.

"I don't like to put him in with the others; they get to talking and arguing and make him nervous," Llewellyn said. "The other night two of them in the other sitting room were arguing about what they had been able to see out of their jail windows at Leavenworth and they were getting wild. I had to go in and shush them. I never have any trouble and nobody ever gets rough. In the three years I've been running the place, we've never had the police in."

Llewellyn Scott is a colored man who works part time for the government. Out of his salary he supports an aged mother and an invalid sister: pays their rent, which is partly covered by two roomers, and feeds them. He uses the rest of his meager resources to keep the Blessed Martin House going. During the past year he has served 17,780 meals and during the winter he put up about forty-five men a night. Today there were fifteen men sleeping in the house, as many as the beds could hold.

The place is terribly dilapidated. Paper hangs from the walls, and underneath the plaster has

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fallen off and the slats show. The floor slopes in every direction and you walk up and down a grade as you go from room to room. The rent is $26 a month. It is unheated, and in winter they can afford only two gallons of oil a day to try to keep it warm. Down on the first floor in what was originally a big storeroom, he has made a chapel and lined it with corrugated cardboard. There an altar is set up with a statue of the Sacred Heart. Today there were flowers in front of it, peonies and dahlias. They had spent twenty-five cents which a woman had given them (they had been praying for her sick daughter)—money which they might have spent for food. There are plenty of chairs in the chapel and four *prie-dieux*. Here at five-thirty every night they gather for the rosary and the litany. Most of the men who come to the place are not Catholics, but they soon learn the prayers and they all love to sing.

"The Board of Health came and made me take out some of the beds," Llewellyn said. "They wanted to know if I had a covered garbage can. I told them garbage cans were for rich folks. We have nothing to throw away. When we have nothing we don't eat. But down the street a Jewish baker gives us bread."

John J. O'Brien, veteran, sat with us there as we talked. On the window sill a tiny black kitten washed itself with a bright pink tongue. John had just hiked down from Chester, Pennsylvania. He had been in Philadelphia, visiting the Catholic Worker house there, and he talked of the conditions in Chester. Fifteen hundred men just thrown out of work by a factory which was moving south, and a few hundred men just let off a ship. We ought to start a place there.

John started a place here in Washington recently but it only lasted two months. He started with too much rent, $45 a month, which he paid out of money he had saved from his small pension. He had visited the place in Pittsburgh and it was there he got the idea. Houses of Hospitality for men all over the country. Using all the unoccupied buildings. The men building up self-help groups, working together for mutual aid.

His place didn't last because John became terrified. Convents and monasteries started sending him their mendicants and he was not able to handle them all. He didn't know how to feed them, how to live from day to day. He didn't know that Saint Joseph is supposed to handle those things for us. He had expected that human agencies would step in and help once the thing got started, and when no one came to help he got discouraged.

Last month the house closed up and he passed on the furniture to Llewellyn. Now, however, he is determined to start again, this time with a smaller place and expecting nothing. "I'll do what I can myself, and I'm not going to stop. I'm going to keep after this. I'll start now the little way."

It's a strange fight for the weather-bitten veteran, clad in dungarees, used to the roads and the men who are tramping the roads. It's a new kind of a fight, but something has to be done.

"We'll do what we can," he repeated, "and some day they'll take these unoccupied buildings and start some hospices. A place to live and something to eat now, and then we can plan on what to do. Then we can plan on getting back the land."

Harrisburg

All the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality aim to be poor. They are in the slums but somehow we never get down quite low enough. There are always a few rungs lower to go on the ladder of destitution. Besides when we get through scrubbing and painting or whitewashing, there is a decent look about the Houses which contrasts greatly with other places in the neighborhood. Llewellyn Scott's place in Washington is poverty stricken and dilapidated beyond hope of repair. The building just won't stand it. The house in Philadelphia has an outside toilet, a shanty in back, but, unlike other places in the neighborhood, at least it is not one to be shared with five other houses.

Here in Harrisburg there just isn't any toilet. You go next door to the neighbors. And there was no running water until a week ago. Most of the houses on the block have no running water. The neighbors pay one man down the street for the privilege of getting pails of water from his house.

Our place, the Blessed Martin Home, is two rooms, now scrubbed clean. There is electricity, tables and chairs, magazines to read. There is paint and linoleum on the floor, the linoleum donated out of her salary by a colored cook who works all day and then comes over to help us in the evening.

There is a faucet in the kitchen now, but no sink. We are begging for that.

The women, colored and white, who are engaging in the Catholic Worker activities among the children and families in the neighborhood, are supporting themselves and there is little money to spare. They have to advance little by little, at a snail's pace.

Due to lack of decent living facilities, no one is resident in the house permanently, but different families have been given the use of the place as a temporary lodging — two white families with thirteen and seven children respectively and one colored family with seven children.

How they got along in two rooms with no water and no toilet is hard to understand. But these families had been evicted in the quiet, orderly way Harrisburg, capital of Pennsylvania, has of doing such things. A moving van drives up to the door, the furniture is carted out and put in storage. The

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family is turned into the streets to roam around until some welfare agency or relief bureau takes the case up and resettles them. Then they pay for moving into their next place. In one case the children were rolled out of bed and left in their night things as the clothes and bedding were loaded on the van. Even the ice box with some food in it was taken. Neighbors sheltered the evicted family.

Our house sheltered Lucille, too. Lucille was a colored girl, twenty-three years old. She was found dying in an empty house by Mary Frecon, who is our Harrisburg representative. Lucille grew up on the streets. She and her brothers and sisters just prowled around, living as best they could. For the last few months, ravaged with syphilis and drink, Lucille had been cared for by an old colored man who lived in an abandoned shed down an alley. He gave her his cot—that and a chair were the only things he had—and he waited on her as best he could. But the flies were eating her alive, huge horse flies, and in her agony she crawled out and sought shade and relief in an abandoned house next to ours where another old colored man had taken refuge. He too took care of her—they know the uselessness of appealing to agencies—until the neighbors told Mary about it. She found her moaning and crying and trying to beat away the flies that fastened themselves on her open sores.

The few women who carry on the Catholic Worker activities here brought her into their clean little rooms and there they tried to take care of her.

Not a hospital in Harrisburg would have her and it was only after five days that Dr. Boland got an ambulance from Steelton (they could not get one at Harrisburg) and sent her to the House of the Good Shepherd at Philadelphia where they deposited her without a word and with no papers about her case. The House of the Good Shepherd is not a hospital, but it is for such girls as Lucille had been. So they took her in, nursed her, and there she died not many weeks later.

While she was lying over in the Catholic Worker house she had been baptized and anointed by Father Kirchner of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Harrisburg is full of Lucilles and a few visits to the slums there can explain why.

After we visited the children and some of the neighbors at 1019 Seventh Street tonight, we went across the street to Mrs. Wright. She lives in a rickety two-storied house, owned by the city and completely out of repair. The banisters are falling down and the steps are unsafe. Here in the only two habitable rooms, she, her seven children, her husband and another woman have refuge. They have three beds and they all sleep in one room. The kitchen is only big enough for the stove, the table and a few chairs.

Mrs. Wright sat there with her youngest baby, six months old, on her lap. He is thin and moans constantly. He has had pneumonia and whooping cough, one house burned down around him and the other day the whole ceiling came down upon his crib. He has lived through these six months, but from the look of him he will not live much longer, poor baby. And God knows he will be happier dead. It is hard to see the look of settled sadness on the faces of the others.

Mary Frecon and Jean Records tried to clean the place up for them. They went in with pails and mops and with cold water and plenty of soap they scrubbed and scoured. But it didn't show. The hot foul air caught at our throats as we went in, and half strangled us.

Mary Frecon, married and with a family to look after, is not able to live in the House of Hospitality at Harrisburg, but she has certainly made her home another CW unit. Right now she has a young woman with two small babies, one and three years old, living with her. She picked them up at one of the evictions she was covering. The girl's husband has abandoned her and she has endured great hardships. There were even nights before her second baby was born that she sat out on doorsteps all night. For the last year or so she had been making her home with other poor families and working for them.

The greatest difficulty in Harrisburg is to find a home to live in, even when a family is on relief and has money to pay rent. Housing seems to be the greatest immediate problem of the city. But thanks to Mary Frecon and the Harrisburg Housing Association which she has built up (it is an interracial group) there is now $1,800,000 available for housing projects and half of it is going for the Negro. Not much, but something to start on. Mary is interested in projects which will enable the residents to have land where they can raise their own food, but it will take a great fight to put that over. But she is a fighter, and we are hoping that her efforts will see to it that this new housing is for the truly poor and not just for middle class salaried workers, as it usually is.

Music for Nightfall

Since flesh is solute, since it wastes in air,
For all the proud austerities of will,
And bones discern what thinning mist they wear
That gives no warmth against the creeping chill,
Let the wise heart—so foolish-fond, but wise—
Make use of air, that wastes the flesh away,
And from that breath—so brief a thing—devise
A song for singing what it needs must say.

Singing how flesh, so delicate, so dear,
Is soon deflowered in the storm of Time,
Singing as sweetly for the bones to hear,
Till bone and flesh, so sorrowed for in rhyme,
Fall half in love with that dread tryst they keep,
Like drowsy children being sung to sleep.

DAVID MORTON.

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Art in Flushing

The New York World's Fair has put great stress upon the arts—plastic and pictorial. Here is an analysis of the result.

By James W. Lane

SEEN from the elevated railway, the New York World's Fair seems to be a conglomeration of broad stucco escarpments and ramparts, decapitated domes, isolated pylons, ramps and other undecorated truncations. It is only when one moves into the grounds that the very real virtues of the place begin to appear.

When I underscore the good things, I must not be understood as meaning that there is nothing bad. While I am on the whole very enthusiastic about the Fair, particularly its irreproachable landscaping and interesting diversity of modern architectural types, I have also found the undistinguished. In this category fall Friedlander's four statues of the various freedoms, than which nothing could be so inappropriately symbolic, for they are lack-lustre and without the inner compulsion of the ideal to be free. Somehow or other the nude, especially when arrogant, seems not the right choice for matters pertaining to civil liberties. Likewise, there are some singularly muddled murals, one by Francis Bradford, in which two brindled bulls have gotten mixed up in the ugly color of a nebula, and one by Pierre Bourdelle on the North Food Building—Pierre Bourdelle is a great designer, but this mural of congested and intertwining anatomies in low-relief in tones of *sang-de-boeuf* and cream of tomato (the pigments have been mixed with Portland marble dust) is not Bourdelle at his best. There is a hideously bad gilt statue in the somewhat stodgy interior of the British Pavilion; a terrible green statue, reminiscent of Henry Clews's worst but one quarter as competent, in front of the Heinz building.

I am glad to say that some of the architecture at the Fair is precise, simple, honest and imaginative. The most satisfying building is the Belgian Pavilion. Built in mahogany-colored, sand-faced blocks from tile works at Courtrai, blocks which are like young paving-stones, and underlined with a base of shiny black marble and slate, its exterior gives a most pleasant black-and-tan appearance. The architect, M. Vandervelde, has used on the floor of the large central room at the entrance black linoleum with bright blue squares. The ceiling is of patterned glass. The railing on a landing one step above consists of a hempen rope strung through bronze standards. Indeed, the use of bronze or copper is common all through the Fair and, very often, as in the La Salle exhibit of the General Motors building or in the British Pavilion or on the exterior of the General Electric building, where it is set off by blue paint, is altogether effective, particularly when teamed with glass or glass brick.

The French have had more experience with Fairs than any other nation, so that it is not to be wondered at if they have better taste for what is effective in Fair architecture. The main façade of the French Pavilion has a jutting constructional marquise that describes a great sweeping bracket of shelter from the next-to-the-top story and that upholds a refreshment terrace from which the best view of one of the features of the Fair may be seen—the marvelous fountains in the Lagoon of Nations. Of this feature the French have made the best use of any one.

The architecture of the Soviet Pavilion is monumental and richly ornamented. Mints of money were spent on it. Black marble has been used as a fine balance to brown blocks which are lighter in hue than those in the Belgian Pavilion. The Netherlands Pavilion is striking in form and color, with a beet-root tower, and orange and blue stripes marking edges of the façade.

Democracy and justice

It is remarkable, thinking it over, how each nation in its pavilion at the Fair stresses democracy and justice. This propaganda about freedom and public welfare strikes one on every side. I suppose all foreign countries feel that they must go in for this horn-blowing so as not to make it seem as if the Russians have gotten ahead of them or started the game first (as the Russians did). Yet it is a little tiring, just like the pseudo-moralism that is preached to you in one of the most wonderful exhibits at the Fair, that of General Motors, where one is more or less told, in the Futurama, that the be-all and end-all of existence is good roads. Norman Bel-Geddes has in this building done a sterling architectural job. Inside he would not admit one blob of colored paint. The ceilings are gold cloth, the walls, black bakelite. The muralist, Dean Cornwell, to whom he entrusted the task of doing two interior murals showing the assembling of a car in a General Motors plant, had to work in Wolf pencil on aluminum sheet

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and gold leaf on this bakelite wall surface. There is beautifully precise engineering drawing in these murals and the only oil is a transparent varnish that is stippled on with the fingers to render chiaroscuro where necessary.

Although the ramps and planes of the General Motors building exterior are modern and architecturally plastic to a degree, the Ford building has a better-knit style; but interiorly it is undistinguished, even in its exhibits. For the Chrysler building Henry Billings has done two notable and simple murals under the porches of the façade. Both of them are pleasingly and thoroughly painted, with a sense of deep space and good air, and don't appear, as do some of the murals elsewhere, the work of a careless draughtsman and colorist who was stampeded for time.

Good mural work, over which I do not much enthuse, because it does not seem sufficiently simple, is Rockwell Kent's in the General Electric building. Two figures floating in the upper air, as the figure floats in Mr. Kent's "Voyaging" (of the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington), create the spark which sheds a pyramid of yellow light upon a skyscraper city. In the foreground penumbra machinists are dumping their hand tools, and a girl figure, similar to the one in "The Glen," the painting of a County Galway landscape the artist did eleven years ago in Ireland, sheds tears. The purplish moundlike hills in the background recall his strong work of a decade ago and have been culled from it. This mural is an oil on canvas that has been *marouflé*-ed or stretched tight on the wall surface. I do not know why some of these technically accomplished murals fail to be inspiring, but they do. In the Elgin building are less pretentious murals by Kipp Soldwedel, but because they are more quick in their draughtsmanship and simpler in color, they appear less sententious and are among the most successful I have seen at the Fair.

I think that the fancied necessity of telling a story, which the Treasury Department and Federal Art Project in competitions for post-office and other murals have fostered in painters throughout the country during the past five years, has ruined many of the muralists at the Fair. They put too many figures or too many compartments in their compositions. One need only cite the murals by Monty Lewis on the Sports and Clothes building, those by Arthur Crisp on the Schaefer building, and those on the South Food building. Crisp's figures are in themselves well-drawn in the style of Benton or of Paul Sample, where planes, angles and folds are pronounced, but there is too much detail and the mural dryly tries to wed the homely and the ideal in a fashion to recall the worst of such marriages made by the late Edwin H. Blashfield. Of the very large murals quite the best is Mahoney's modernistic composition in the Federal Building, strong and pleasing in both color and drawing.

Better murals, because pleasanter in color and simpler in design, are those by André Durenceau in the Court of Power (which is lined by some pleasing blue light-brackets) and Hildredth Meière on the Medicine and Public Health building. These, to which may be added Hermann Van Cott's on the Administration building and the ship murals on the Maritime building, have a largeness of design and simplicity of mass with plenty of air between figures. That is just what the best murals in European art always manifest, from the simplicity of Fra Angelico's to the elegance of Pinturicchio's and the swirl of Signorelli's.

The exterior sculpture

The exterior sculptures are much more uneven in quality. Manship's "Moods of Time" are excellent, for Manship long ago showed that he instinctively understood the modern idiom in sculpture. Also "The Astronomer" by Carl Milles is by a master of sculpture. Rosenthal's figure at the entrance of the Elgin building is arresting: a man of the Neanderthal variety, cast in black diorite, striking a huge gong in the middle of which is set a chromium star. There is a fine stainless steel statue at the entrance of the Ford building. This is most modern in technique, for it is done in the manner of Pevsner, where instead of protruberances concavities occur, giving a hollowed out look. Elsewhere, however, the statuary is not challenging. The four grouped figures on a pedestal in the Court of Power are downright bad and even more ambitious and pretentious things, like Gleb Derujinsky's "Legend of Europa," are done in a poor material, plaster. Granted that the Fair is not to last forever, friability should not be suggested by massive sculpture. Yet there is plenty of good material intelligently used, as can be instanced in the stone "Saint Francis" outside the French Moroccan building, or in the humorous figures of limestone on the façade of the Medicine and Public Health building, or in Sidney Waugh's "Atlantica" done in Corning glass in the Corning display.

Tinted stucco is so much the fashion for the exterior architecture of the Fair—the tones ranging through various degrees of intensity of the primary colors as the buildings radiate from the theme center of pylon and perisphere—that it is unusual to find buildings, like the Swift building, the Swedish Pavilion and the Contemporary Arts building, wholly or partly in another material. Yet the first two of these buildings are veneered, as are many of the canoe-hull bridges, in polished wood. The Contemporary Arts building, done in a fine redwood, with one of those broad-browed hat-shaped porticos that are prevalent at the Fair, has been decorated with mural designs in pierced

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brass. These give a decidedly homey yet sumptuous effect.

In this building is a mammoth show of contemporary American painting, sculpture and prints —over 1,200 items! Comparing the paintings with, for instance, the paintings on view for the summer at the National Academy, one could see that there is a sense of less intense color in those at the Fair—fewer high blues, greens and oranges —but at the same time more interesting and more topical subject matter. The painters whom the Fair displays are not afraid to show cranberry-pickers, a sharecropper, the crucifixion of a colored man, a trunk peddler or a public school yard at 8:30. Gentility and atmospheric impressionism have bowed to more formal design and to sociology.

Yet how much more alive to issues of the day American painting is than British may be felt in the British Pavilion, where a section devoted to modern British painting can show little that is connected with sociology and that little (as in the case of Spencer) unvitalized. Other countries, like Rumania, Japan and Italy, are exhibiting paintings, too, and the Masterpieces of Art Museum, which has just opened, is showing five hundred of the world's great European paintings, many of them from American collections.

Why We Have Idle Millions

Who is entitled to ground rents? A restatement of a radical theory.

By **John Harrington**

THE EDITORIAL, "Idle Millions," in the June 2 issue of THE COMMONWEAL is interesting in its summary of the vast funds lying idle in banks, trust and perhaps insurance company vaults, while hordes of men are idle and industries stagnant. You say, "The New Deal has not yet pointed the way out of the depression. . . . We must keep at it; we must explore all major constructive channels until we find a way."

This condition in greater and lesser degree goes back far beyond this and the previous several administrations; and the next administration, whatever party may inflict it on us, has made no promise that assures us of anything new as a definite plan.

But there is a plan, not new at all, which has been covered up by "a magnificent silence," which will prevent these "idle millions" from accumulating and remaining where they are; which will keep them distributed and at work among the people.

THE COMMONWEAL has pointed out, not only now but many times in the past, the existing evils of unemployment, lagging industry, poverty and their trail of disease and crime; and has rightly attributed these conditions, in their principal economic aspect, to an unjust and inequitable distribution of the national wealth. Let us examine some facts in our present system of distribution.

The present mal-distribution

The facts of such mal-distribution are that certain groups of our people withdraw and receive much more out of the national income than their contribution thereto. Examples of such withdrawals are exorbitant salaries and bonuses of officers and agents of great corporations; profits derived from speculation in securities and merchandise; fortunes made from monopoly and semi-monopoly of certain largely used products and processes, such as petroleum products, coal, metals, timber; the excessive profits based on "gentlemen's agreements" in mass production industries; fraudulent and semi-fraudulent schemes and manipulation such as the Insull activities in utility corporations; and the employment of many thousands of persons in uncalled-for, unproductive employments.

These are only some of the facts of distribution of our national income away from producer groups, and to groups that, although themselves often producers to an extent, absorb many times more than the value of their own production.

Their "take" is not all the cause of the evils complained of; in fact it is a relatively small part. Let us look behind these things and see if "economics" can teach us something more. Economics is a science; that is, the application of the laws of nature. As a bridge builder must obey the laws of physics if his bridge is to stand up, so the lawmaker must make his laws to conform to certain natural laws, or else fail in the purpose of his legislation.

The above "leaks" in the annual national income are almost trifling compared to the draft on national income by the most respectable graft of all—the huge total of ground rent, estimated at nine to twelve billion dollars a year—enough to pay our national debt in three or four years. Clearly this needs economic explanation for thou-

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sands of readers; there are thousands of other readers who believe it to be true. The explanation, while seemingly difficult, is really simple, and can be seen by any thoughtful observer without a book. To explain by illustration:

The workings of ground rent

If a farm will produce for an average farmer 25 bushels of corn per acre, with the average application of labor and capital, and other crops in proportion; and if such crops constitute common wages, or an average living, and no more, such land is marginal; it produces no ground rent, and has no commercial value.

If another farm with better soil or location will produce 50 bushels of corn per acre, and other crops in proportion, with the same application of labor and capital, such land is supermarginal and produces not only common wages, or an average living, but also produces an excess of 25 bushels of corn per acre. This excess is unearned ground rent. It is a gift of nature.

Ground rent is always a gift of nature. Under our system of land tenure ground rent goes to the owner, whether he be the user or not. This is as true of land in city as in country, or land worth millions of dollars an acre in the metropolis as of farm land worth a hundred dollars an acre in the Mississippi Valley. Ground rent is what gives land commercial value. Given the annual ground rent of land, you can compute the commercial value, or *vice versa*. This is the economic law. From this we may proceed to the moral law, which is equally evident.

Ground rent, being a gift, is entirely unearned. It comes to humanity as freely as air and sunshine. It belongs by nature, or by the law of the Creator, to all men equally. It is God's gift. It cannot be sold away to individuals any more than can the sunlight, the air or the blue sky. No government, state or ruler can sell ground rent away from the people. Such pretended sale is as void as would be a sale of the sunshine or the *aurora borealis*.

Now speaking politically, ground rent, collected annually, should be placed in the public treasuries, to meet public necessities. It is this gift of nature, withdrawn without return from the national income, that leaves one-third of our people "ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed." It is the lack of this, the people's fund, that, in the crushing burden of taxes upon labor, capital and industry, causes dislocation of our national life. Only by restoring ground rent to the people can our present downward course be halted and reversed. Magazine articles and books without number are written and read prescribing ways and means of solving the labor-capital quarrel, unemployment, slums, housing, relief, farm and mortgage problems; and under and over them all, the problems of taxation. National and state legislation struggle with all these problems. But no progress is made. The next sessions of the legislatures will find all the old problems; they will continue to pull to the right and pull to the left; and no progress ahead will have been made.

But to many, perhaps to the majority, to turn ground rent into the public treasuries from those who now collect it may appear harsh, high-handed and arbitrary. It need not be so. It may be done in short and easy steps.

All direct taxes now imposed on land values are paid out of ground rent. In all states many items of personal property are exempt from taxation. Laws are proposed in some states to exempt homesteads up to a given value from taxation. Such laws are commendable; but the exemption should apply to the building and improvements only. In places land is assessed and taxed at full value, and the buildings at half their value, or less. While ground rent is unearned income, house rent is earned income, being a product of labor.

Shifting the tax burden

So, by little steps, in a generation or two, the laws of taxation can gradually shift the load of taxation from labor and labor-produced property, gradually letting it fall upon land values, and thus absorb ground rent. As this plan grows as an accepted public policy, it will seem easy and natural; and an upward turn in social well-being will soon be apparent in a society that is now seen by many, and perhaps truly, to be on a downward course, with communists and socialists the most active "saviors of society" through plans that will destroy liberty.

Repeating a quotation from THE COMMONWEAL, "The most important immediate development will have to be a fuller grasp of 'the sciences of civics, sociology and economics.'" This is definitely true; for old errors die hard; old privileges are tenacious; prejudices are persistent; civilization is still very young. The Creator is wonderfully generous to His children if they knew how to receive and use His gifts.

But journals like THE COMMONWEAL must break the "magnificent silence." They must examine the natural laws of distribution, for therein lies the secret of equitable distribution. Two men sail out on the water to catch fish. One or the other may attend the sail and the helm while the other attends the nets and the lines, and from time to time they change places.

When they reach shore they each take half the fish. Is that not an equitable distribution, nature's plan? But the law steps in—or the government, and sells the lake to a Master-Mind; and thereafter when the fishermen reach shore they take one-third each, and the Master-Mind takes one-third. The latter third is rent. Is that a natural distribution?

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IN THE MIDST of the deluge of international and domestic news of the most disturbing character which poured out last week-end, and on into the week, through the press, concerning Danzig in particular and the political battles in Washington with all their implications of further troubles developing, it was most comforting to note the ample space given to the reports of the inauguration of the Father Jogues Peace Memorial. It would be more correct, of course, to refer to the Saint Isaac Jogues memorial, since the Jesuit martyr was canonized in 1930.

Special congratulations are due to the pioneers of the promotion of this cause. July 3, the day of the installation of the memorial, with notable speakers representing the state of New York, other religious bodies and the state's historical societies, was certainly a great day for Father Peter Moran, organizer of the Father Jogues Society and author of the inscription graven on the fine statue of the martyr. As he said his Mass that morning in the tiny, temporary shrine to Isaac Jogues, which Father Moran built thirty years ago on Harbor Island in Lake George, it must have been difficult for him to avoid distracting thoughts, even in his joy and spiritual satisfaction over the outcome of his long work of propaganda.

Such a distraction—of course, I do not say that Father Moran was in fact so distracted—but if he was, a distraction concerning that highly disputable term "propaganda" would have been quite natural. In any case, it may and should serve as a theme for meditation and exact definition in connection with the inspiring events on the shore of Lake George; because "propaganda," which in its origin and its really true application is a noble word and a highly desirable thing in itself, is today threatened with ruin or perversion. More and more its use even in relation to its pristine employment becomes subject to misunderstanding; the word itself and its rightful application are alike tainted with an almost universal suspicion. "Oh, but that's propaganda!" is a very easy, though often quite unjustifiable, retort to any statement on any disputed question, quite without any serious effort to examine into the credibility and reliability of the statement thus rejected. When we recall that the word propaganda came into use because of the congregation of "Propaganda Fide," that department of the organized official work of the Holy See of the Catholic Church which was set up to head the world-wide performance of the Church's mission of teaching the truths entrusted to her by her Divine Founder to all races and all nations of mankind, its threatened capture by the organized and unorganized forces that serve not truth but falsehood and its consequent degradation are keenly deplorable. I say its "threatened" capture; for I think it is still a disputable question as to whether "propaganda" is or is not so discredited as to be practically unusable in its original and true signification. And I for one hold with those who maintain that it still may be rescued from its captors, or would-be captors, and restored to its faithful meaning and authentic employment. After all, in spite of the tide of false "propaganda," truth is truth, and those who fight for the truth are ill-advised to yield the language of truth to their opponents.

What Father Moran, and Father Wynne, S.J., and many other honest propagandists for the truth relating to the first American martyrs and saints have so notably accomplished should hearten us in facing the hard battles of today, which are likely to become even more strenuous in the future, in advancing the claims of religious truth against the secular falsehoods and perversions which are threatening the whole structure of our world civilization with disaster. For example, while it is a glorious achievement to set up throughout our country memorials to the religious pioneers of the past, the influence of such memorials and shrines will be unduly limited, and perhaps partly evanescent, unless there is also produced a solid mass of historical literature which will educate Americans as to the extent and character and depth and continuance (or decline) of the Christian culture brought to the western world by the pioneer missionaries and developed under their direction; or of that of those civil authorities and leaders who even when they personally were not exemplary representatives of Christianity (speaking mildly on that subject!) were, generally speaking, imbued with the spirit of Christian institutions.

It may be admitted, I think, that the basic researches in this field of American history, carried out by the historians of the great religious orders—as for example, the great Father Engelhardt, the author of the monumental history of the Franciscan missions of upper and lower California—while indispensable as repositories of fact, and great quarries of material, can never reach the general educated reading public, or affect history as taught in our schools and colleges, save indirectly; because, even when they are undeservedly so criticized, they are regarded as "sectarian" in their point of view; "propagandist" in the sense of arguing a thesis less universal than the stark facts of scientific history. It is different, of course, with the work done by such scientific historians as Dr. Peter Guilday and his colleagues, and similar groups; who have been very notably aided, without, however, any objective alliance, by such historians as Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, of the University of California, who has accomplished such a mighty work in tracing and relating the whole field of Spanish and therefore Catholic influence in the regions now embraced in our national limits.

True propaganda, in a limited and practical sense of the real meaning of the word, could be accomplished by Catholic societies and groups who would devote part at least of their funds and their energies to the wider distribution of the historical literature which reveals the extent of the influence exerted by Catholic culture in the formation and development of our national institutions. But superficial and merely boastful propaganda will do far more harm than good. If propaganda in this field, as well as others, is to be restored to its original good estate, its champions must sedulously avoid the spirit as well as the methods of those who have degraded it even more by exaggerations and perversions of facts than by the wilful use of lies.

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Communications

IN MEMORIAM: JOSEF ROTH

Seattle, Wash.

TO the Editors: Twice did Josef Roth lose his home. The first time, when the young officer returned from the war which he joined as a patriotic youngster in the proud Imperial Austrian Army. He found a dwarfed fatherland, a frightened bourgeoisie and a revengeful government of socialist agitators in Vienna. The second time, when Dollfuss's state collapsed. His wife went out of her mind.

But he regained his faith and he kept his wonderful talent as the most musical and graceful writer in the German tongue of our days. Paris and his French hosts loved him. The young waiter, the *patron* and his charming wife at the little Café de la Poste opposite the Luxembourg were as tender with him as with a little child. His chair on the sidewalk was the mecca of the Austrian refugees and German *literati*. Some of his books are available in English. He was one of the great talents, perhaps superior to many a widely advertised colleague—the little man with his walrus moustache, the gay twinkle in his eyes and the always hoarse voice.

Life broke him physically and what went on in Vienna killed him. He was ours: a Catholic, and a Christian.

May he rest in peace.

H. A. R.

LIMITS TO REACTION

Lundy's Lane, Penna.

TO the Editors: The first sentence of the first editorial in the June 16 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, "Limits to Reaction," rouses us workingmen to enter an emphatic protest. The sooner our editors, and especially editors of religious publications, recognize that intelligent Christian employees are opposed to the activities of the AFL and CIO, the better for all concerned, and especially for the influence of the churches.

Employees by a large majority look upon these two organizations as purely racketeering enterprises, and the Wagner Law as a deliberate attempt to support that racketeering. This has caused the employees, not the employers, in a number of states to appeal to their legislators to enact laws that will protect them from these rackets. The recent legislation in Pennsylvania to which you refer is the result of this protest by the working people to the racketeering that has been going on in this state under the protection of the NLRB, and we propose to keep it up until we get relief.

If the present Congress will not repeal or at least amend both the Wagner Law and the Wages and Hours Law, then we will send men to Congress who will.

The most serious barrier we have to obtaining the necessary legislation is the short-sighted or ignorant support of these two rackets by a large number (but not all) of our Church leaders.

It is little less than criminal to refer to these two rackets as if they were the only labor unions in the country. There are a large number of employees in independent unions—probably more than the dues-paying members of both the two big unions; certainly more than the number of *willing* members of those groups.

We suggest that you get in touch with the Christian Labor Association, 2270 Ottawa Ave., N.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the National Federated Independent Union, 301 Lemcke Bldg, Indianapolis, Indiana. There are also a number of other organizations honestly attempting to gain for the working people a fair share of the product by efforts in harmony with lawful and Christian standards.

FRANK HENRY SELDEN.

PARADISE PLANTERS

Cornish, N. H.

TO the Editors: It seems necessary to point out to your readers that Walter Prichard Eaton's otherwise admirable review of Mrs. Katherine Burton's "Paradise Planters," in your issue of May 26, neglects perhaps the most important aspect of the book from a Catholic point of view.

Mrs. Burton is the first writer to my knowledge to give a sympathetic account of the intellectual forces at the Farm which played so important a part in bringing about the conversions of Issac Hecker, founder of the Paulists, Orestes Brownson, Sophia Ripley, and the rest of the little company who progressed to Catholicism by way of German philosophical idealism and Fourierist economics and sociology. The tendency of the majority of the previous writers who have concerned themselves with Brook Farm has been to treat these conversions as the ultimate proof of the hopeless eccentricity of the farmers and their divorce from reality, or to slide over them as unworthy of notice, as indiscretions of otherwise brilliant people. Of course, this early Catholic renaissance is important, though it was abortive and had little general influence, for it paved the way for the more important, if equally abortive, pre-war American Catholic renaissance, and is a solace today to those who mourn the lack of a Catholic intellectual tradition native to this country.

MASON WADE.

THE TENDENCY OF CATHOLIC SOCIOLOGY

Princeton, N. J.

TO the Editors: I am glad to see your editorial (June 23) comment on the advocacy of a "corporative order" by some Catholics as *the* Christian social order. If by a "corporative order" is meant an "administrative form" in which occupational groups are recognized by the state as performing administrative functions for the state, under state-control, and to the exclusion of any other group or individuals from these spheres of economic or social action, then I agree with you that we should maintain a very critical attitude toward any proposal to introduce such a system here.

To push farther but one point that you touch upon, is there a corporative order in operation anywhere today in which labor has the freedom of organization and the right to strike that it has in the United States? Is not the

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corporative system associated in fact with a requirement of specific government approval as a condition of functioning as a labor organization, as well as with "a particularly stringent method of compulsory aribtration"? Granted that a corporative order need not involve political dictatorship, must it not involve state control of occupational organization and state control of the terms of collective agreements? As you so well point out, the limits of these controls, as contrasted with our present situation, need further clarification from the advocates of a corporative system.

I do not believe that many American Catholics really favor state domination of labor organizations and of employers' associations or compulsory arbitration for this country. Most of the American advocates of what they call a corporative order have in mind, I believe, little more than a generalization of voluntary organization on an occupational basis, with organizations of workers and organizations of employers making voluntary agreements, and with the state merely enforcing minimum standards and preventing any voluntary group from maintaining terms or prices contrary to the public interest. And it seems to me that a name can be found for such a program that is less suggestive, in present-day usage, of state control of economic life.

DAVID A. MCCABE.

THE CHAMBERS ARE AT IT AGAIN

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In "The Chambers Are at It Again" (June 23), E. L. Munzer destroys the Chamber of Commerce argument against government spending, but he neglects the real motive behind their argument. This is the hate a majority of businessmen have for Roosevelt's social reforms: the Wagner labor act, the SEC, the minimum wage act and the social security act which have curbed their formerly arbitrary power.

Since Roosevelt's reforms are very popular they cannot be attacked openly. The spending policy can be attacked very easily by dramatizing the rising U. S. debt, by the parable of the spendthrift who spends more than he earns, by attributing lagging recovery to the government's spending all that money, etc. This is why Alf M. Landon says that in 1940 the issue will not be Roosevelt's reforms but his finance. Thus do these businessmen hope to defeat the New Deal in 1940 and destroy F. D. R.'s reforms.

Of course if they succeed there will be no reduction in government spending. Rather I predict an increase. Since the day of Alexander Hamilton, businessmen have favored heavy government spending. They are well aware that today a reduction in government spending is disastrous. *Barron's,* February 27, 1939, reported that when F. D. R. wanted to reduce government spending in 1937-38 he was stopped by panicky if private pleas from business. Under the GOP there would be great differences where the money went: more on roads, less on housing, very much less on relief (WPA probably would be abolished and all relief turned over to local, preferably reactionary, political machines; this is called "taking politics out of relief"), much more on arms. This latter type of government spending is a favorite of business.

Most interesting is the ability of industrial and financial politicians, called big businessmen, to use fraudulent, hypocritical arguments with no intent to follow them. It shows they are better politicians than most people imagine.

THEODORE SERRI.

Chippewa Falls, Wisc.

TO the Editors: I have just read Mr. E. L. Munzer's article, "The Chambers Are at It Again," in the June 23 issue of THE COMMONWEAL. I take it for granted he wrote it with a typewriter and I believe he made a tactical error of primary importance. He should have used an open-faced brush, by preference of the sort still used in the hinterland to whitewash outbuildings. He could have achieved a much broader effect that way and an even finer artistry. I hope you won't think I am trying to be sarcastic. I realize the writer was cramped for space but he should have realized that, too. He tried to cover the entire "pump priming" theory in some 1,600 words, and while the story of the Creation is told in something less than half as many, someone ought to tell Mr. Munzer that he has scarcely anything in common with the writer of the Pentateuch. As matters stand his effort will probably generate much more heat than light on a subject which needs light badly.

I am carrying no banner for the United States Chamber of Commerce. I have been reading the dreary outpourings of that organization now for a dozen years and the only conclusion I feel justified in drawing from them is that, after all, the severe pain in my neck may be due to arthritis.

Turning to the list of your contributors I find Mr. Munzer listed there as "a financial and monetary expert and economic adviser to industrial corporations." I have no quarrel with such an identification. After all, I have always wanted to see Sancho Panza on a horse. But I think we have a right to insist that he draw the line at airplanes.

I shall not attempt to comment on the article in detail. I shall only call attention, if I may, to the closing paragraph where the writer reaches, as he should, a climax of sorts in the statement that there is no difference between private and public debt. I have often wondered how economic experts get that way. It seems to me that any schoolboy should know that a private debt is a direct lien against some definite bit of private wealth and that private bonds are issued in some rough approximation at least to the sound principle of ability to pay. And it seems to me that any mature individual should know that a public debt is a horizontal lien on all wealth, whether held outright by economic royalists or held in trust by insurance companies for the wives and children of the rank and file.

You have probably begun to suspect that I am not in favor of "pump priming." Quite so. I am against it always and at all times, and I regard it, as currently practiced, as nothing more than a particularly obnoxious sort of political chicanery. The very term connotates a blythe and vigorous cooperation with business, big and small, to get the wheels of enterprise in motion. It connotates a waving of banners, a beating of drums and a shouting

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through trumpets almost of the college cheering section variety. Obviously current "pump priming" efforts have fallen somewhat short of this happy objective. That ululant cacophony we hear from the business bleachers doesn't sound like cheering. And before we anathematize business leaders too severely we ought to remember that we would probably wail too if we had been spending most of our time being chased up and down the republic by "pump priming" bannermen armed with snickersnees and dripping with wrath.

But my objection to "pump priming" cuts deeper than all this. My major objection is that, whether honestly undertaken or otherwise, it is merely a sugar-coated approach to stateism. We have serious obligations here in America. We have the obligation to preserve, if we can, that way of life which for lack of a fitter name perhaps we have come to call democracy. And we have obligations to our employed, our unemployed, our old and our unfortunate. We haven't achieved such a triumph of mechanistic perfectibility as yet that we can banish all our obligations by swallowing a given number of Mr. Aldous Huxley's *soma* pellets. We must still discharge them in the sweat of our brows, and as regards our obligations to our less fortunate fellows the name of that sweat is taxation.

I have no objection to the use of public credit to cushion the severity of cyclic swings. On the contrary I believe there is valid place for such credit. But it seems to me that it is high time that we turn honestly and with as much courage as we may possess to the possibilities of the taxing power as a proper and precise instrument of redistribution of our national income to the end that we may all enjoy at least those minimal decencies to which our status as children of an all-just Creator entitle us. And lest anyone should hasten to make the point that such use of the taxing power is a political impossibility, I can only agree beforehand that it most assuredly is right now and that it will probably continue to be as long as men to whom we turn for leadership continue to waste their time and befuddle our senses with windy dissertations about the joys of climbing toward Olympus over increasing heaps of government bonds.

And I would like to call attention of the editors of this particular magazine to another point. If we were to dig into the matter deeply enough, I suspect that we would find that "pump priming" is merely a rationalization of two necessary concepts of mechanistic liberalism: namely, egalitarianism and a material abundance made inevitable by the "infinite perfectibility" of the machine.

W. H. Gharrity.

COMMONWEAL POETRY

New York, N. Y.

To the Editors: I am glad to see that in the short issues of the summer The Commonweal is not forced to give up all poetry. "Far Trees Keep Up," by Mr. Coffin is another evidence that Commonweal poetry is consistently the best published in America, even if some of the poems are not exactly "easy."

A New York Reader.

Points & Lines

Americans of Two Minds

The very day The Commonweal went to press last week, with Herbert Wright's article on the Bloom Neutrality bill, the House of Representatives by a fairly handsome margin inserted an amendment which made the bill closer to Mr. Wright's desire, in one respect at least. Said he: "The Bloom bill makes no provision whatever for an embargo on arms . . ." The amendment, introduced by Representative Vorys of Ohio, is as follows:

> Whenever the President shall have issued a proclamation under the authority of section 1 (a) it shall thereafter be unlawful to export, or attempt to export, or cause to be exported, arms or ammunition from any place in the United Staes to any belligerent states named in such proclamation.

It will be noted that the language of this amendment differs from earlier neutrality legislation, which placed an embargo on "implements of war" as well as "arms and ammunition." Said the *Christian Science Monitor:*

> Apparently such things as airplanes and oil—material not specifically listed as arms or munitions—could be sold.

What Mr. Wright pointed out—that the Bloom bill leaves the President's proclamation optional with him, rather than required whenever war is declared—is still a part of the bill. So there would be no compulsion, even in the case of a "declared" war, for the President to make his proclamation and thus institute the embargo.

The essence of the controversy over neutrality legislation is well summed up—with a Roosevelt bias—by Harlan Miller in the Washington *Post* (read into the *Congressional Record* by Senator Lee of Oklahoma) in the form of a dialogue between a Senator-father and his son:

> Dad. Sure; but I'm for Cordell Hull's "neutrality-for-peace" plan. He's an experienced statesman.
>
> Son. But what's wrong with an embargo against selling to either side in a war?
>
> Dad. Because that's exactly what the dictator war lords want us to do. Such an embargo is the same as giving Hitler 500 new submarines.
>
> Son. How would Hitler vote on our neutrality bills?
>
> Dad. He'd vote against Secretary Hull's peace-neutrality bill and cheer for embargo. Then he could go to war tomorrow, with the world at his mercy.
>
> Son. But why do you call Mr. Hull's bill a peace bill if it would make Hitler mad?
>
> Dad. It might make him mad, but it would discourage him from fighting, because the peaceful nations would be in better position to defend themselves.
>
> Son. But why do some Senators favor a neutrality bill that would bring on a war?
>
> Dad. Because they think we can stay out of the next world war—wishing will make it so. We might move off the planet.
>
> Son. Then what do you think is the best way for us to stay out of the next war?
>
> Dad. By doing all we can—and that's plenty—to prevent the next war.

New Dealers feared that the passage of the Vorys amendment would furnish aid and comfort to the dictators. The New York *Times* quoted Senator Bankhead:

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Mr. Bankhead . . . said he feared it would cause "the troublemakers of Europe to draw the conclusion that there is not concerted action in his country between the executive and legislative branches on national policy. The next few days may bear out this apprehension."

The New York *Herald Tribune* published a dispatch by John Elliott, describing in detail the dismay of the French at this sudden development. Here is some of it:

The action of the United States House of Representatives in restoring the neutrality bill embargo on sales of arms and munitions has caused profound dismay in France, where it was regarded as a direct incentive and encouragement to Chancellor Adolf Hitler to proceed with his plans to annex the Free City of Danzig. . . .

Such was the opinion of former Premier Léon Blum, who wrote in the Socialist organ *Le Populaire* today: "The British and French warnings perhaps have contributed toward removing the imminent danger of war. On the other hand, the unforeseen event which has just occurred at Washington risks operating in a contrary sense. I know that in the event of complications in Europe, the situation would probably be reversed and that Congress, as well as the American people, would rally immediately to the views of President Roosevelt." . . .

Henri de Kerillis, a prominent Nationalist Deputy, said in his newspaper, *L'Epoque:* "This is all the harder to bear, because the admirable speeches and courageous attitude of that great American Roosevelt had filled our hearts with hope."

How completely the Belgians and French have been relying on America in case of war is indicated by the wrapper put on a recently published book of American impressions by Gustave Charlier:

Here is
IMPARTIAL
testimony
concerning our Allies of yesterday . . . and tomorrow.

American support of the point of view of the Administration with regard to neutrality is ably expressed by an editorial in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch:*

The reasons for our opposing the imperialism of the dictators are far stronger than the reasons for which we opposed the militarism of the Kaiser. And yet isolationist Congressmen are naïve enough to think that we would refuse to sell materials of war to the non-aggressive nations, even though they paid cash and hauled the goods away in their own ships. . . .

There is no law and no power which can avail to close the American storehouse against nations which may want to come and obtain weapons with which to defend themselves. Considerations of sympathy, respect for our own safety, selfish concern as to our national prosperity—all combine to make the moral negative in this case unenforceable.

Congress—House and Senate—should quit wasting precious time on the impractical arms embargo and concentrate instead on a neutrality plan which will conform to our national ideas and to the realities of power politics.

Opposition comes from the undenominational, Protestant *Christian Century,* referring to the original Bloom bill:

It is hoped that Senate resolution to fight this Bloom bill to a finish will not waver, no matter what the heat in Washington.

Said *Time:*

Neutrality promised to delay adjournment more than any other subject, and in this fight Filibusterer Pittman, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, was cast for another leading rôle. Last fortnight the House received from acting chairman Sol Bloom of the Foreign Affairs Committee, prognathous hero of the reception to King George and Queen Elizabeth, a bill drafted in accordance with Franklin Roosevelt's and Cordell Hull's desire for a free hand in case of war abroad. . . . In the Senate a band of 21 isolationists led by Idaho's Borah and North Dakota's Nye promised to fight this Roosevelt brand of neutrality all summer if necessary.

Father Coughlin devoted a radio sermon to amplifying the case for extreme isolation:

Last Sunday I read for you an editorial from the *Intelligencer* of Wheeling, West Virginia, which clearly pointed out that if such legislation should pass, the President of our country, whoever he may be, would be empowered to name the unjust aggressor in any war happening anywhere in all the wide world; that this President would be empowered by virtue of the neutrality bill to aid with arms, munitions and credit any nation in all the world suffering from any aggressor whom he judged to be an aggressor.

This means that instead of being neutral we would take sides; instead of being peaceful we would participate in war; instead of upholding the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine, which confines our activities to the Americas, we would spread ourselves over the entire world; instead of revering George Washington's policy of "no foreign entanglements," we would adopt Lenin's policy of world revolution and Britain's policy of world empire. Or, in metaphorical language, the benign Uncle Sam would doff his familiar attire to wear an international policeman's uniform—the same dear old gentleman who has been so unsuccessful in policing the beat infested by rapacious aggressors in America. . . .

I ask you, without any disrespect to Mr. Roosevelt or to any other future President, is this democracy? Is there any one man living today who is intelligent enough to judge the rightfulness or the wrongfulness of international events which occur in mid-Europe or mid-Asia or mid-South America? If, after six years and more of endeavoring to judge what is wrong with the United States of America's internal affairs, how could Mr. Roosevelt or any other President claim the ability to judge what is wrong with foreign affairs?

Just as talk of a Roosevelt third term has led interested researchers to question whether Washington might not have liked one himself, so the appeal to a traditional isolationism has led at least one writer to deny that the founding fathers were isolationists. Writes Stephen Peabody in the Communist *New Masses:*

Faced with a world situation in which the conflict, as far as this country was concerned, lay between progress and reaction, they [the founding fathers] did not hesitate to make agreements which aided the cause of progress, and which took the maximum advantage of the contradictions in mercantilist-feudal society. The ultimate proof of the correctness of their policy was victory for the revolution.

The *Christian Science Monitor* states what is undoubtedly the feeling of many Americans:

The more regrettable feature about the House debate is the smallness of the contribution it has apparently made to the vital object of helping America to make up its mind as between isolation and cooperation. The vast majority of people in the United States are torn by a mental contradiction. They want to avoid involvement in war, yet their sympathies are with the peaceful, democratic nations, and they recognize that American interests and safety lies ultimately on that side. The extreme closeness of the vote in the House shows this dilemma still far from settled. It is to be hoped the debate in the Senate will be not merely impassioned or time-consuming but enlightening.

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The Stage & Screen

The Federal Theatre

THE ABANDONMENT of the Federal Theatre Project is a misfortune, not so much because of what it had accomplished as for what it might have led to. Inefficiently directed and extravagantly run as it was, it yet gave to the theatre a few admirable productions, notably the Negro "Macbeth," "Murder in the Cathedral," "Doctor Faustus" and "Pinnochio." Unfortunately, in New York at least, it had until very recently been shot through with left-wing politics and dominated by the Workers' Alliance, with the result that the taxpayer seeing what he paid for rubbed his eyes with astonishment. Recently, through the efforts of Equity, this condition had been corrected, but the bad impression remained and was a deadly weapon in the hands of the Federal Theatre's congressional opponents. It would not be an exaggeration to put on the tombstone of the Federal Theatre: "Killed by the communists of New York." Outside the metropolis, the project was not dominated by left-wingers, and did much good work, but the eyes of Congress were on the New York offerings, and the combination of so much outright radical propaganda with directorial inefficiency (one of the plays was rehearsed for more than a year) made opposition to the project's abandonment futile. As to how the communists got control of the New York project, would take an article far longer than this to explain. If at the beginning, however, the management had been delegated to Equity, things would have been very different, but the hand of the amateur controlled in Washington. The result was inevitable. The real actor was submerged by those who would like to act, and the propagandist took the helm in New York.

The Federal Theatre was of course a relief project, and as long as it remained that, its artistic rôle must have been limited. Indeed it is very doubtful to my mind whether any artistic project should exist on relief. The world does not owe a living to those who act or paint or write. All who are worth considering do these things because they love to do them. If they are not able to make a living by them, society should not be taxed to supply that living unless they produce something of unusual merit. If they do not, they should enter other work, work that is materially productive. But it is none the less true that art does need patronage, and now that the government through its taxes has lessened the power of the individual to provide that patronage, it is up to the government to supply what it has destroyed. This should have been the future of the Federal Theatre. Shedding its relief rôle, it ought to have been turned into a National Theatre, devoted to giving the best in the world's dramatic literature in the best possible way—in other words, an endowed artistic theatre. Had not the communists through the Workers' Alliance got control in New York and had the Washington direction been saner and more professional, this might very well have occurred. But the combination of the dilettante with the communist was too much, and the inclusion in its direction of such able men as Emmet Lavery, while improving conditions, came too late to save the day.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Death, Taxes and Hollywood

LAWRENCE EDWARD WATKIN'S legend, about Death and Gramps and Pud, and Paul Osborn's play made from this story, can now be seen on the screen. Even though Sidney Franklin's production is not guilty of too many Hollywoodian changes, it misses the emotional impact of the stage version. However, "On Borrowed Time" is still recommended fare for those who can take a genuinely charming fantasy in modern dress. Its best scenes, those in which Sir Cedric Hardwicke as Mr. Brink (of Eternity) comes with gentle persuasiveness to make his final calls, are done with amazing sincerity and reality. When Gramps, effectively played by Lionel Barrymore, traps death in the apple tree, the world is in a bad way because none of the living can die. But Mr. Brink outsmarts Gramps through Pud. Bobs Watson, lacking the acting ability of Peter Holden who created this rôle on the stage, makes Pud less real but more tearful. Director Harold S. Bucquet, working overtime to clarify every point, might have spared us the finale in which Mr. Brink conducts Gramps and Pud to a sun-burst Glory. One characterization remains entirely unchanged: Aunt Demmy is still a pismire of the lowest order.

The sparkling lines and good acting in "Bachelor Mother" are much fresher than its story's single theme, which is repeated until it is worn threadbare. Ginger Rogers has a foundling baby thrust at her because she is suspected of being the mother. Ginger tries to get rid of the baby, is unsuccessful, learns to love him and fights to keep him. Throughout all this tiresome business of the baby's parenthood, Director Garson Kanin manages to inject a feeling of benevolence and frolicsome humor that rises above plot.

If death and babies as subject matter aren't your idea of appropriate summer relaxation, try "Man About Town," which is highly amusing without much of a story. Jack Benny in top form, with plenty of gags, is greatly helped by colored Rochester (Eddie Anderson), who practically steals the picture with his clever miming and dancing. Morrie Ryskind's screenplay resembles a minor Shakespearean comedy full of mistaken identities and confusion over who kisses whose wife. The situations, wisecracks and even the big musical extravaganza numbers rip right along under Mark Sandrick's lively and well-timed direction.

Further light entertainment for still hotter weather is provided in "Second Fiddle," a comedy that starts out with satire on the gone-with-the-windish search for a girl to play Violet, and ends tritely with the "find" going back to Minnesota broken-hearted, because the star's love for her was only a publicity stunt. The movie is much pepped up with Sonia Henie's fine skating, Tyrone Power's and Edna May Oliver's throwing glasses and wisecracks around and Rudy Vallee's and Mary Healy's singing some swell new songs by Irving Berlin.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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More Books of the Week

A Treatise on Dictators

Dictatorship in the Modern World, edited by Guy Stanton Ford. Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press. $3.50.

MAN IS NOT a political but a private animal despite the redoubtable authority of Aristotle. Of this the essays that constitute this book seem further proof. The psychological factor, it would seem, that gives rise to dictatorship is a feeling of weariness and disenchantment—a lack of confidence in the capitalistic system and a surrender to the desire to "let Mussolini do it." Man lives not by bread alone, but by catchwords. Hence there is much force in the indictment by Max Lerner: "The most damning blow the dictatorships have struck at democracy has been the compliment they have paid us in taking over (and perfecting) our most-prized technique of persuasion and our underlying contempt for the credulity of the masses."

With dictatorship, its rise and pattern and possible meaning for us it is, then, that these essays are concerned. These, understand, are essays not by columnists, but by experts. Of the fourteen contributors, ten are professors, many are historians and all scholars and specialists. What integrates the essays is merely the subject. For the authors write about dictatorship from every possible angle; and the opinions of one in no wise affects the independence or judgment of the others. The result is as learned and always as fascinating a book as has come into my hands in a long time.

I suppose that the nature of the case determined that more emphasis be given to fascism than to communism. For as one author puts its, Russia's "internal development has been for years unknown, even to most of the people who claim intimate knowledge." Nevertheless the book contains one long essay on the Soviet Union by John N. Hazard. It strikes me as pretty much a miracle of objectivity. It does seem to me, though, that the author takes the new constitution over-seriously, and is guilty—in his desire to be objective—of some really beautiful understatement. For example: "Collectivization was intended as a voluntary process, but it was pushed with such vigor that many a peasant found it expedient to join." I can hardly take Mr. Hazard seriously, either, when he says that the *only* limitation upon him was space for not giving us "the exhaustive analysis which complete understanding of the Soviet form of government demands."

Much nonsense and more journalism has been written about Germany. But Harold Deutsch comes to his task unusually well-equipped, and his two essays on Nazi rule come pretty close to being the best part of this book. Mr. Lerner would seem to disagree on this point, but it is Mr. Deutsch's opinion that the Catholic Church will have to bear the brunt of the defense of Christianity in Germany. He finds that "Catholicism is equipped with powers of resistance in which German Protestantism is lacking." This, he contends, is because German Protestants "are too accustomed to a close connection with the state to enable them to present a united front against its encroachments."

Despite some distinctions anent communism that demand a stronger stomach than mine, Hans Kohn's "Between Democracy and Fascism" is a penetrating essay, whose generalizations and interpretations are always caught fast in a profound knowledge of European history. Max Lerner's "The Pattern of Dictatorship" is the kind of thing he has led us to expect. It is far and away the leading essay in the collection. It is comprehensive and illuminating — a masterly piece of interpretation and analysis. Few indeed are the scholars who can, as he can, write so brilliantly and with so much originality and who carry their learning so lightly.

This, then, is a provocative and intelligent book; an unusual and dispassionate survey of the prime problem of modern history. The blurb quotes a reviewer as saying that "if dictators were philosophers they would read a book like this." Perhaps, yet I cannot forget that pregnant remark of Monsieur Bergeret: "If Napoleon had been as intelligent as Spinoza he would have lived in a garret and written four books." FRANCIS DOWNING.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Black Workers and the New Unions, by Horace R. Cayton and George S. Mitchell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. $4.00.

THIS BOOK deals with one of the profound social problems of the time. It is a study of the position of negroes as industrial laborers and their participation in labor unions.

The negro, until recently, was an agricultural worker living mostly in the South. The World War and the industrial expansion during and following the war brought the negro in huge numbers to the Northern cities as industrial laborers. The sad condition of agriculture in the South tended also to drive the surplus population into the cities, mostly the Northern cities. Problems of race relationships, both in industry and in unions, have thus been brought to the front. Those problems must be understood and their solution studied.

This volume is a factual study of what happened during the labor union expansion following the setting up of the National Recovery Administration. The study is confined to the iron and steel industry, the meat packing industry and railroad car shops, these industries being selected especially because of the large proportion of unskilled workers engaged in them and because a substantial proportion of the laborers in these industries are negroes.

The background of unionization in these industries is set forth; the coming of the new unions is described; and negro participation in unionization is set forth. The facts of the book cover the second year of the NRA, from March, 1934, to March, 1935, but a supplementary discussion is given of the CIO campaign to organize the steel industry and the meat packing industry.

The book is factual and not a brief for any plan. It aims to provide the basis for an understanding. It does, however, give a suggested program for negro labor designed: "(1) To increase and strengthen favorable union sentiment in the Negro community; (2) To break down the racial prejudice of white workers and union officials; (3) To provide resources for the unionization of Negro workers in the Negro community."

No one who presumes to understand the labor problem can afford to miss a careful study of this book; no one who cares about peaceful race relationships can fail to study it; no one who presumes to be concerned about the future can afford to miss it. The problems which it presents factually are too serious to be passed by, either by employers, employees, unionists or statesmen. JOHN A. LAPP.

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CRITICISM

Illusion and Reality; a Study of the Sources of Poetry, by Christopher Caudwell. New York: the Macmillan Company. $5.00.

THERE IS NO DENYING that this is a heavy rather than a weighty book—heavy to the head and hand which try to tackle it. Also it is a sad book: not so much because the young author met death fighting with the forces of the recent Spanish Government, since that may well have been his appointed path from illusion to reality, as because of the general confusion of its ideas and ideals. The primary purpose of its writing seems to have been to justify the ways of Marx to poetry-lovers—the jacket blurb assuring us that from it one may gain "a clear conception" of the "mutual relations of art, religion and science, from the standpoint of modern psychology." This seems rather a large order for a student less than twenty-eight years old to compass; and it is not made any smaller by the fact that, believing historical materialism the only sound social background, he finds it necessary to make long detours into physics, anthropology, history, biology, philosophy and, of course, economics by way of illustration. To religion he does not pay much attention, since fluid mythology is the only sort of religion he finds of any use to poetry or to life: two of his curious conclusions being that as soon as a faith claims to be "true" it becomes false—just as poetry ceases to be artistic as soon as it emerges from primitive tribal emotion into a conscious personal art!

There are moments of intuitive rightness—for instance, the identification of surrealism with anarchy or his summing up of the tragedy of art today as the "tragedy of will that does not understand itself"—which suggest that the author might have made an interesting impressionistic critic if he had not so early become enmeshed in the abstract theories of communism. As his volume stands it is a highly involved and diffuse effort to do for the communist esthetic what Blanche Mary Kelly has recently done with beautiful clarity for the Catholic esthetic.

KATHERINE BRÉGY.

G. K. Chesterton, by Maurice Evans. Cambridge: at the University Press; New York: the Macmillan Company. $1.75.

AS THIS small volume is described on the title-page as "The Le Bas Prize Essay," the reviewer appreciates the author's necessity for generalization and concision. As an introduction to Chesterton's work, this book will serve very well. Mr. Evans has attempted to explain Chesterton to us in terms of his whole-souled reaction from the fashionable heresies of our time and the evolution of his personal philosophy. In evaluating his subject as a Christian apologist, Mr. Evans becomes a trifle deprecatory, but the book is on the whole judicious.

It is only fair to say that not a little of the interest and charm is attributable to the numerous quotations from the works of G. K. C. that appear in these pages. It is a humbling little book, too. As we read through a documented survey of Chesterton's opinions, we realize how much we have learned from him in the past and how many times we have maintained as our own edifices of thought founded upon something of his.

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

FICTION

Next to Valour, by John Jennings. New York: the Macmillan Company. $2.75.

A DEFINITE EFFORT is being made to make of this 800-page historical novel a best seller, similar to *Gone with the Wind*. It is doubtful if this can be done, however, since it is much more similar to *And So—Victoria* than it is to the novel about the Civil War.

Next to Valour is written as though it were an account penned by a James Ferguson, born in Scotland in 1730 and made fatherless by the warfare in Scotland in 1745, of his adventures in the New England and Canadian area from 1745 to 1760. There is a strong flavor of melodrama and of the improbable in various sections of the narrative, and at times the author has introduced events and observations not at all essential; but if one wishes a vigorous, interesting novel, here is one. Early New England comes to life; Indian warfare is depicted unforgettably; the science of scouting is well presented; and the war between the English and the French is made intelligible as between real men concerned with vital issues.

The language at times becomes vigorous, but so were the lives then lived. If one will become enmeshed in the affairs of the hero, James Ferguson, this story will become truly the "escape" novel it has been termed. There is surely nothing derogatory in that term, however, as applied to a novel; neither is there any unfavorable reflection implied in the term "realistic" as applied to this book. It is a rousing story of colonial America and deserves many readers.

PAUL KINIERY.

RELIGION

The Eucharist, by Peter Skarga, S.J. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co. $2.00.

PETER SKARGA, a contemporary of Saint Peter Canisius, seems to have been his parallel in many ways: both rejected brilliant church careers and became Jesuits; both saved their countries, Germany and Poland, from falling away from the Church entirely; both were eminently popular preachers, hard workers in the Lord's vineyard, splendid organizers, good diplomats and holy men. Father Husslein's preface to the present book gives a stirring and enthusiastic biography of this son of Poland.

This small book sets out to make us acquainted with Skarga and may well foster a closer study of the Polish reformer. I think this is the greatest merit of the book.

Yet I wonder if this might not have been better achieved through selected chapters from his letters and works, knit together with short biographical remarks. There is hardly any other but a biographical justification to publish this book on the Eucharist, which can only be of value to students of the history of dogmatic theology. A broader

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public will hardly find a helpful approach to present-day thought on the Blessed Sacrament. The positive doctrine goes scarcely further than our own catechism, popular devotional literature or ordinary sermons. The new situation, after Pius X's reforms and arising from the liturgical revival, calls for a more historical, a deeper theological and a more modernized psychological approach. Some of Skarga's chapters are so purely apologetics for his own time that they hardly stir any interest in a modern reader. His historical observations need correction in several points. We cannot simply ignore three centuries of historical work, which have been quite fruitful. Sometimes the famous preacher is slightly baroque, as when he makes a great argument against the danger that the preparation of the gifts at the offertory, with its "proleiptic" prayers, and the real sacrifice contained in the act of consecration might give us the idea that there are two sacrifices, and when he tries to dissuade us from such an idea by pointing out that, although Solomon offered gold and silver for the building of a temple, nobody thought of building two temples. Apart from his misinterpretation of the significance of the offertory, the argument is a boomerang.

We want to hear more about our hero, especially about his splendid social work and his attitude toward the reunion of schismatics. The famous union of Brest-Litowsk is by no means any longer regarded as a *non plus* of perfection. How far did he approve of it? H. A. REINHOLD.

SCIENCE

The Migration of American Birds, by Frederick C. Lincoln; illustrated with 22 maps and 12 paintings in full colors by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $4.00.

AS AN INTRODUCTION to American bird lore for the novice or as a pleasing integration of knowledge to date for the experienced ornithologist, Dr. Lincoln's book, with the fine reproduction of Mr. Louis Agassiz Fuertes's paintings and with unstinted, helpful maps, presents the best of much patient labor. Dr. Lincoln is a former Curator of Ornithology at the Colorado Museum of Natural History and is now Chief of the Section of the Distribution and Migration of Birds of the United States Department of Agriculture. The book is one of the Doubleday, Doran "Nature Library" series, which began when the firm was Doubleday, Page and Company, a series well known to those interested in the subject.

The amazing distances birds travel, even some of the littlest—for instance, from South America to the tundras around Hudson Bay or to Alaska, for rearing their young, then back again to avoid the killing rigors of winter—have bemused naturalists from the dawn of history. Aristotle and the elder Pliny had some excellent information on the subject as well as some fantastic notions, or, as a modern scientist would call them, postulates. From the 180 miles an hour "stoop" of a hawk to the five miles an hour flight of the woodcock, the 60-mile speed of carrier pigeons (Dr. Lincoln, incidentally, was Pigeon Expert of the Western Department, U. S. Army, during the World War), or the press dispatch from British Columbia which told of a Canada Goose "that carried a passenger in the form of a tiny hummingbird that was nestled in the soft warm down of the larger bird," the facts and fancy of our bird life are here to read.

Dr. Lincoln most engagingly threads the mazes of the mooted matters and states the possible exceptions with fairness. The book has an index. F. T.

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The Inner Forum

POPULATION problems are greatly exercising Englishmen and Frenchmen, both Catholic and non-Catholic. A recent issue of the London *Tablet* summarizes the situation as follows: the population of Germany is at present increasing slightly (4 percent in 6 years); that of Italy is increasing at about the same rate; the Poles are increasing rapidly; the French are diminishing; and "the British population, although not yet declining, is now certain to decline." These problems were discussed recently in the House of Lords, which considered the proposal of Viscount Samuel that a royal commission be set up to inquire into the question of the falling birth rate.

Meanwhile *Temps Présent,* a Paris Catholic weekly, which has been conducting a campaign for "moral rearmament" (which it describes as "for a moral revolution") has come to the second plank of its platform. The first was alcoholism; the second is abortion. The subject was introduced in an article by Charles La Madeleine which begins by reciting briefly the facts concerning French population. In 1938 there were 34,741 more deaths than births in the country. In a period of 60 years the population has been increased by 3,000,000 naturalized foreigners, but it has lost 400,000 in the number of French people. In 1750 the average number of children per marriage was 5; in 1830, 4; in 1890, 3; in 1939, 2. In Paris the average is only one child per married couple. If the present rates continue, France will lose 12,000,000 population in the next 50 years. She already has the highest proportion of old people of any country in the world.

M. La Madeleine gives reasons for this infant mortality: alcoholism; the weakening of religious belief; the exodus from the land; economic conditions and increased knowledge which lead to a voluntary reduction in the number of children; the practice of illicit birth control; the practice of abortion. He quotes many authorities to show that the latter reaches the astounding figure of 400,000 cases a year—more than France's total births. He points out that if this figure could be reduced by one fifth, the population of France would begin to increase rather than decrease.

The London *Tablet,* in commenting on all this, calls attention to the idea of Henri Bordeaux that a few French Canadians might be induced to emigrate to France, "where they are so much needed."

CONTRIBUTORS

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David MORTON is an Amherst, Mass., poet; his latest book, "All in One Breath," was reviewed in THE COMMONWEAL a few weeks ago.

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